



ST MATTHEW'S PRIMARY SCHOOL



NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 1 - MAY 2024

GOODBYE AND GOOD LUCK TO ...

Yvonne Basinski who has been one of our kitchen managers for many years and will begin her well-earned retirement this week. She has seen many changes, not least the closure of the **Luton School Meals Service**, and she has taken on the challenges of working first with **Miquill** from 2021 and then with **Relish** since February this year. Every child who has a school meal would be used to seeing Yvonne on a daily basis and she will be missed by everyone. Our other kitchen manager, Jackie, will be following Yvonne at the end of the school year ... but more on that nearer the time.

Shadaab Azim has been managing the school's finances in her role as Senior Finance Officer for the past few years, but she is now going to work directly for the local authority in supporting different schools in their budget planning and monitoring. Good luck, Shadaab; if you find any pots of money not being used - just send them our way!

HELLO AND WELCOME TO ...

Eleni Zerva has joined our staff from William Austin Junior School and has taken over **Robin Class** since Mrs Kirkpatrick started her maternity leave.

Erica Byron joined us shortly after we set up our new fifth Year 2 class as a teaching assistant. Erica has settled in well and is already making a valuable contribution to **Rose Class**.

UNIFORM REMINDERS

At the moment we seem to be experiencing four seasons every day, with cool and foggy mornings turning into warm, sunny afternoons, with a heavy downpour of rain to spoil everyone's lunchtime. When we return in June, there's a chance the warm and sunny weather will dominate, so make sure your children are dressed appropriately. We add **YELLOW/WHITE** gingham dresses and grey shorts to our uniform in summer to help keep children cooler during the day. As always, a hat is an **ESSENTIAL** for protection from the strong sunlight, and sun protection cream should be applied thoroughly before the children come to school.



We're always on the lookout for items to add to our stock of pre-loved uniform. Bring any uniform items that your own children have outgrown and we will arrange for them to be laundered and made available for someone else to have.

MARVELLOUS MILO



As we reported on our website a couple of weeks ago, **Milo**, our school dog, successfully completed his training from **The Dog Mentor** recently. Moreover, around half a dozen key members of staff involved in Milo's work in school all completed their training successfully. Milo is rapidly becoming a familiar friend for so many children in school. Keep an eye on Milo's own page on our website for regular updates on his visits to school.

stmatthewsluton.com/milo/

YEAR 6 END OF KEY STAGE 2 TESTS

Well done to every pupil in Year 6 for achieving maximum attendance last week – SATs week. Maybe it was the delicious breakfasts that made everyone want to get out of bed and into school by 8am each day. It was clear to see that everyone was aiming to do their very best, which is all we can ask. We have a few weeks to wait for the tests to be marked – the results are expected in July. The focus for Year 6 now turns to writing. The Year 6 teachers will be assessing the children's writing and moderators will visit the school to confirm that the assessments are accurate. All the Year 6 assessment outcomes will be reported to parents at the end of term along with our usual annual reports.

LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Not all learning takes place in the classroom and it is always good to organise **educational visits** to enhance the children's enjoyment and understanding of their different topics.

During Summer 1, we have taken **Year 5** to the **Royal Observatory** in Greenwich – a new destination for St Matthew's – to learn more about space exploration, the solar system and the universe.



Year 2 classes visited the **Ashridge Estate** to learn all about the great outdoors by building woodland shelters, searching for mini-beasts, observing their habitats as well as collecting natural materials to create environmental art.



Year 3 also journeyed into London to visit the **Natural History Museum** to support their work on rocks and fossils. They were excited to see the specimens collected by Mary Anning in the early 1800s.



This week, our **Year 1** classes went on the train to the south coast to enjoy a day by the seaside in the town of **Brighton**, visiting the pebble beach, enjoying an ice cream and a ride on the carousel near to the world famous Brighton Pier.

YOUR SCHOOL STILL NEEDS YOU

We are still looking for parents – or grandparents – who are interested in supporting the work of the school by becoming a **school governor**.

The commitment is only approximately **six meetings per year**, either face-to-face or online, plus occasional visits to school to see our work in action.

If you are interested, call **01582 723970** or email admin.stmatthews@smps.uk or just drop into the **front office**.

YOUR SCHOOL NEEDS YOU!

We currently have vacancies for **PARENT GOVERNORS**

Our Governors work together to:

- help to raise standards
- check progress towards the school's targets
- support and challenge the head and staff
- be accountable for the school's performance

The Governing Body is responsible for planning the school's future direction and makes decisions about spending and staffing. It meets once every half term.

New governors will be supported, receive training and be valued.

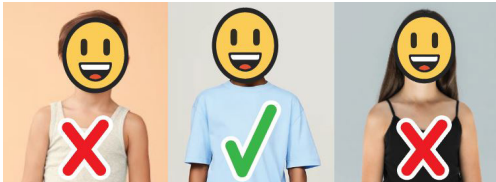
If you are interested in becoming a school governor, please speak to a member of staff or contact the school office on 01582 723970 or email personnel@smps.uk.

WEATHER REMINDERS

We cannot guarantee a record-breaking hot June and July like we had in 2022, but you never can tell what is likely to happen. We hope that all children will come to school with a water bottle which they can top up during the day to keep themselves hydrated. There is a lot of scientific evidence that indicates that concentration and thinking drops rapidly if children begin to feel thirsty.

Many health professionals recommend freezing water in the bottle overnight and bringing the frozen water to school. As this slowly melts during the school morning, the children are able to sip a little cool water every 20-30 minutes, rather than guzzling down large amounts in one go. Little and often is the ideal recommendation.

As mentioned earlier in this newsletter, a sun hat is definitely an essential item. Our playgrounds have few areas of natural shade and children can easily become overheated in the middle of the day. Parents should also apply sun protection lotion or cream on to their children's arms and faces before bringing them to school. Finally, remember that T-shirts must cover the shoulders to avoid sunburn.



GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

A good night's sleep is vitally important for children to recharge after the events of the day and to be adequately prepared for the next day. Children who have broken or disturbed sleep patterns are unable to think and concentrate during the school day. But what exactly is a **"good night's sleep"**?

NHS specialists recommend 9-12 hours of sleep for primary-aged children.

It is important to establish a regular evening routine so that children go to bed feeling calm and settled. A regular routine should include the following features:

- avoid caffeinated drinks such as tea, coffee, cola, energy drinks and fizzy pop especially after lunch;
- avoid large meals immediately before bedtime;
- encourage exercise / physical activity until about an hour before bedtime;
- put away electronic devices at least an hour before bedtime and definitely have no devices in the bedroom;
- a calm story time can help to settle a child ready for sleep;
- if children wake during the night, encourage them to settle themselves back into their own bed rather than involving a parent.

Set the bedtime routine for 30 minutes to 2 hours before sleep time, as appropriate for your child. Praise your child in the morning for following the routine to help reinforce good behaviour; this can be aided by the use of a reward chart or stickers, with a small token prize when a certain number of stickers/rewards have been won.



UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE LINKS

We have been fortunate to have been chosen by the University of Bedfordshire to be involved in two projects. The first has been taking place during the past half term in our Year 4 classes. The children have been given access to an iPad app called **Coherence** which tests the children's ability to pick out beats and rhythms from a piece of music and then copy these when they see visual cues, hear audible cues and responding to no cues at all. There is much evidence of the value of rhythm and music in contributing to children's learning. Think how you might have learned your times tables - probably by chanting them rhythmically which helped you remember the tables patterns. Our Year 4 children have access to the app for 40 minutes, three times a week, and we look forward to hearing about the outcomes from the University early in the next half term.

Our Year 5 classes are also involved in a project designed to encourage the children to think of university as a pathway to a future career. University staff and students will visit St Matthew's and provide opportunities to find out about what learning looks like in higher education. The children will then make a follow-up visit to spend a day at the University of Bedfordshire campus to experience a day in the life of an undergraduate student. We hope that this will plant the seed of an idea in our pupils that university is an option that many of them can consider.



ARE YOUR CHILDREN SAFE AT THE PARK?

We are well into the summer term, when many children like to go to the park for a while on the way home from school.

This is fine if the children are in Years R to 4, as we know that they are all collected safely, usually by a parent or a named responsible adult.

However, we have traditionally trusted our Year 5 and 6 pupils to leave the school premises independently at the end of the day, with the consent of their parent.

We would always advise parents to establish a **safe walking route** home with their children. We hope that all parents know if their child is going to be walking straight home or if they are going to stop for some enjoyment at the park on the way.

We believe that most parents would encourage their children to reach home as quickly and as safely as possible, change from their school uniform into their playing clothes, and then return to the park.

If children have a mobile phone, we would advise parents to contact them by voice or text to confirm that they are home or at the park. Maybe then set a time that the child is expected to leave the park and continue the walk home safely.

Recently, there have been incidents occurring at the park involving our school pupils, and the problems these have caused have not been resolved satisfactorily there and then – consequently, children are continuing disagreements and disputes during the school day. This can then impact on learning during school time.

If children know that their parents are aware of their whereabouts, we feel they are more like to behave responsibly in those 60-90 minutes or so after the end of the school day.